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A PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE

CLERGY AND LAITY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF QUEBEC,

UPON THE QUESTION OF AFFORDING THE USE OF

CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

FOR THE PURPOSES OF DISSENTING WORSHIP.

BY GEORGE J. MOUNTAIN, D. D.,

Lord Bishop of Montreal,

(ADMINISTERING THAT DIOCESE.)

For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.

Judges v. 16.

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DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

You must, very generally, be aware that some discussions have been recently before the public, having reference to an official exercise of the episcopal authority. The occasion, which called for this intervention was one which there was no reason to anticipate, because the question ought, in the first instance, to have been settled upon the spot, in the manner in which it was subsequently settled by the authority just mentioned; and this has been acknowledged, upon fuller consideration, by the party whose proceeding it was found necessary to reverse.

It appears, however, to be by no means superfluous that, after the subsidence of the passing excitement which has been created, the subject should be dispassionately examined, and that minds which are capable of withdrawing themselves from certain influences which sway the opinions of the world, should be enabled to arrive at something like satisfaction respecting the real merits of the question at issue. For it is not only that the cause of Religion must, so far, suffer, when the act of a person who, with whatever small pretensions of his own, is set over you all in the Lord, is painted under an invidious aspect and the impression is left uncorrected which is thus made upon the public mind: it is not only that his usefulness may thence be endamaged within the limits of his charge:—these effects would be something, but they are not all.—There are *principles involved* in which the members of the Church of England ought to know how they stand and what is the part which they should take. If there is a good deal of misapprehension abroad in relation to these principles, and the views of many among our own people are more vague and confused upon the subject than they ought to be, it may be well, perhaps, after all, that a circumstance should have occurred which, however unpleasant in its immediate consequences, may serve, by means of the discussions which it produces, to lead to a juster and more distinct appreciation of the system and constitution of the Church. It is by considerations of this nature that I am prompted, in such form as my office may seem to prescribe to me, to address you upon the present occasion. It is not necessary, nor would

it be proper, that I should involve myself in any disputatious agitation of the subject : in fact, with one exception, it is only by reports made to me that I have become aware of the tenor of those remarks which have been put forth by different parties, in relation to it ; and in order to disembarass myself as far as may be, in treating the question, from any mere local or personal considerations, I have even abstained from making myself acquainted with the defence of the Episcopal proceeding which I know to have been prepared, and published in a Montreal paper, by a friendly and an able hand. The *exception* to which I refer is that of one paper of which the number was sent to me containing an article upon the subject—a paper professing to have in some measure a religious character, and volunteering its subserviency to the interests of the Church. I shall no farther notice this article, which I but slightly examined, than to pass a remark, which is to my *general* purpose, upon some credit which the writer assumes to himself for being above the *fear of man* in the discharge of duty—the fear of man being, I apprehend, precisely the motive which would suggest it to the writer for a public journal, to espouse the easy, worldly, and so called *liberal* view of such a question as this, and to join in the cry against an unpopular, although a necessary act of authority. In fact, the same moral courage may often be required in these days in men who range themselves on the side of authority and ancient order, as has in other times been called into action for the maintenance of popular privilege. What the writer of the article, whoever he may be, could have to fear at the hands of the Bishop, it would, perhaps, be a little difficult to point out.

But let me proceed to consider, in order, the points of the case, which require, as I conceive, to be better understood.

As soon as I received the first information that upon the destruction of the Wesleyan place of worship in Griffin-town at Montreal, the Congregation who had frequented it, had been accommodated with the use of St. Anne's Chapel in the same neighbourhood, I took measures to obtain an official statement of the fact. Circumstances occasioned a delay of some days before the answer was rendered to my enquiries—and hence it was (as it may not be improper to explain,) that a certain interval was interposed between the occurrence itself and my action upon it. Having become possessed of information in a shape which enabled me to proceed upon it, I wrote at once to

direct that the permission which had been given should be withdrawn.

It was easy to foresee that in the exercise of such an act of authority, whatever endeavour might be used to preserve a due attention to the *suaviter in modo* in conjunction with this manifestation of the *fortiter in re*, the Church and her servant would be exposed to no small share of odium and probably of abuse. The attack of the Press, respectable or not respectable, considerate in the observance of certain official and personal regards, (and I am bound to acknowledge that such consideration is not wanting,) or ready for any opportunity of a new fling at the Governors of the Church of England, was precisely what was to be anticipated, and I was fully prepared for it. The ordinary newspaper press, although one portion of it be upon many points in direct and avowed *opposition* to another, may be taken to represent the feeling and to speak the voice of **THE WORLD**. But whatever eagerness may be shewn by many religious parties, in this age of religious tactics, to avail themselves of worldly demonstrations in their favor, and to turn them, without any over-scrupulous examination of their correctness, to their own account, **THE WORLD** and the **CHURCH OF GOD** are two vastly different things. The *force of public opinion* may, and does, no doubt, in various instances, operate for the promotion of good on the one hand and the remedy of evil on the other: but woe be to the christian and special woe to the christian minister who commits himself to the *force of public opinion* as his guide!—Many cases will arise, in many ways, in the uncompromising discharge of duty, which even call for the practical remembrance of an Apostolic charge,—*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.**

I apprehend, however, that although the first impulse of feeling, in the fresh aspect of the calamity at Montreal, might naturally prompt such a compliance as that which did actually take place, yet there are few examples, if any, in which my Reverend brethren of this Diocese will require to be convinced or corrected in their judgments upon the general question here at issue. But this may be the proper place to observe that the reference of any such question to the *Vestry* is not a correct course of proceeding. The powers and privileges respectively of our Congregations and of Ecclesiastical authority, in such matters, are, happily for both parties, sufficiently defined both by the general princi-

* I John, iii. 13.

ples of our Ecclesiastical law and by Provincial statute ; and in virtue of the latter, the laity have a control in some matters not conceded to their management in England. But the disposal of the Church for this purpose or for that, is not among the attributes of the Vestry ; not among the things confided to popular judgment. And it is little for the advantage of any party that the nature or the limits of *spiritual jurisdiction* and *temporal administration*, in the affairs of the Church, should be confounded together.

Upon these points I shall be happy if I can be permitted to afford any help to my brethren of the Clergy in their endeavours to rectify whatever erroneous impressions may be found to exist. With reference to my brethren of the laity, I can hardly venture to look, *à priori*, for the same general acquiescence of judgment in the late episcopal order, as that which I have stated myself to expect from the Clergy. They have not, officially, the same call to acquaint themselves with any peculiar regulations of the Church ; and the spirit of the age is opposed to their just estimation of her distinctive principles. And shall I commit injustice if I attribute to *some* among them, a disposition or habit which prompts them rather to take for their oracle, even in matters of Religion, the daily press and the tone of sentiment which happens to be in fashion, than the precedents or the authorities of their Church ?—rather to go *there* for the resolution of questions which present themselves, although ecclesiastical and theological in their character, than to *seek the law at the mouth of the priest** ?—If such persons will give me their patience and will exercise the courage to decline being carried, as a matter of course, with the prevailing tide, I will not despair, under the divine blessing, of inducing them to view the affair here in question in a new light ; and I must entreat their candid and serious attention to the considerations which here follow :—

I. In the first place, then, I conceive that the matter was one in which *no choice nor discretion* was left open. I conceive that no Bishop of the Church of England is *at liberty* to sanction or permit the appropriation of any Church or Chapel subject to his jurisdiction, for the worship of separatists from his own communion. And here, therefore, as far as regards the Bishop personally, the whole question might end. It is manifest unfairness and injustice to attack the *man* for that which his

* Mal. 2. 7.

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office obliges him to do ; and to impute motives and dispositions for an act which is made imperative upon him by rule.*

II. But, secondly, in the maintenance of this rule, the Church does nothing more than is conceded, upon the common principles of religious liberty, to all other denominations. If the principles conscientiously held by all parties are to be respected, upon what plea or under what colour of justice or common sense, is it to be refused to the Church of England that she shall preserve intact her conscientious attachment to those peculiar views which happen to shut her pulpits against teachers who dissent from her ?—I would that even her own children, in some instances, would shew her the same indulgence of which they are sufficiently lavish in other quarters.—It is no matter, as far as the questions are concerned of common claim to the allowance and acquiescence of the public mind and unmolested enjoyment of particular opinions, whether the principle be correct or erroneous in itself :—it *is* the *principle*, the known, established, prominent, avowed principle of the *Church of England* that, with reference to the exercise of any other than an episcopal ministry, in any shape or manner, within her own pale, she is *exclusive* : the Church of England, with other branches of the Reformation similarly constituted, rejects for herself all ministrations for which the authority is not traceable, in an unbroken line of succession, through the order of Bishops, and she observes this rule with an undeviating strictness. If she considers it as a direct infringement of this principle to establish within her own proper walls, a community of worship with a religious body of which the ministry stands upon no such foundation as her own, and which repudiates all regard for such a foundation, has she not a right to act consistently with the views which she entertains in this behalf, and is it too much to expect that she shall be left to do so in peace ?

III. But, thirdly, we may go a step or two farther in this view of the subject. For not only have we a right, upon the very principles of liberalism itself, to the undisturbed enjoyment of our own views and the inviolate preservation of our own

* As far as the decision of this question may be conceived to depend upon the Canons, it is proper to observe that the Canons of the Church of England have been partially repealed by subsequent acts of public authority : but in all points where they have not been thus repealed, they are held, according to repeated formal decisions, to be, with reference to all persons and things *ecclesiastical*, legally in force.

rules, but, more than this, we compromise ourselves, by any such surrender of those rules as is here in question, to an indefinite extent and in fact become parties to our own condemnation.

We are called upon to open our own Churches for teaching for which we cannot be answerable. I will not dispute that a vast deal of it may be not only earnestly and zealously promulgated, but good in itself and profitable to sinful man. I will not deny that a great portion of it may agree with the principles and doctrines of our own Church. But *all* of it will not agree with those principles and doctrines. I shall not enter into particulars: but this might be very easily shewn. And then the question comes whether we are directly to forward that teaching of Christian doctrine with which we do not agree. Upon this continent, indeed, there has been a system of accommodation carried to the length of opening the same meeting-houses in rotation to every variety of doctrinal teaching; or of holding places of worship in co-partnership between different religious bodies maintaining the very opposite extremes of opinion, as for example between Universalists and Close-communication Baptists. But the fruits of such experiments have not tended, I believe, to encourage the repetition of them. And certainly they are experiments which cannot tend to the advancement either of truth or of distinctness in belief. The *precedent*, therefore, would have been a dangerous one, if no other objection had existed. The door being opened to one religious body in their emergency, it would not be very easy to bar it against any other who may be considered to approach our own doctrinal system, when their emergency, in some shape, might occur in its turn. Suppose the case of an application received from a zealous and respectable Congregation of Baptists who, from some cause or other, might be in great straits for a place in which to conduct their worship.—Is it not manifest that, with the views held by the Church of England upon the subject of baptism,—(let it be still borne in mind that who is right or who wrong, is not the question here,)—the Baptists *must* be regarded by us, as, *in this point*, teachers of *error*? And if

* There is one instance within this Diocese, in which an arrangement of this sort was made, in an earlier and more imperfect stage of the development of Church principles in the portion of the country where it subsists, between our own Church and the Methodists. It is painfully embarrassing; and it can only be hoped that it may, by some amicable adjustment, be dissolved.

any man would tell us that it is a point of little importance in the eyes of persons having spiritual views of Religion, should we not regard *this itself* as another form of *error*, and a dangerous one too, which we should feel ourselves conscientiously bound to oppose?—And if so, would it be a consistent proceeding on our part to become instrumental in causing these opinions viewed by us in the light of errors, to be proclaimed and promulgated from our own altars?—And would it be a very well-calculated method to settle the minds of our own people in our own principles and to keep them, in the midst of surrounding and still thickening distractions in Religion, in *order and steadfastness** within our own fold, that we should establish meetings of different sects within our own Churches,—the echo of whose teaching should be still ringing within the walls, when our own worship would commence, and the interchange of accommodation with whom, being once established as a principle, the habit of wandering backwards and forwards in quest of variety and novelty in Religion, would most infallibly be encouraged?

Upon these grounds it is evident that to avail ourselves, in any such occurrence as that which has led to these observations, of the accidental circumstance that the Church or Chapel, although used with the episcopal sanction for divine service, had not yet been actually *consecrated*, would be a very unsound and unsafe kind of expedient. In the first instance, shrinking, as I will not conceal from you that I did, from the encounter of alienated and perhaps exasperated feeling to be occasioned by my proceeding, and from the popular odium which it would be obviously easy to excite against it, and which I had little hope that men would be so candid or so generous as to forbear from turning to their own account,—I indulged an inclination to take advantage of this distinction, the occupation of the Chapel by the Wesleyans *having actually taken place* and the *time* when things would be ready for *consecration* being, as I was willing to believe, *not very remote*. The plea, however, was fallacious: for if we are glad to profit by circumstances which we can construe as furnishing a dispensation from the rule, it would follow that the rule itself is one from which we should desire to be altogether released; and the principle would, once for all, be admitted that, but for the custom of consecration, standing as a bar in our way, we should be ready to open our Churches

* Col. 2. 5.

for the use of different dissenting sects. And in a Diocese like this where it is a matter of constant occurrence, from the poverty of many of our Congregations, that Churches are for a length of time in use, before they are complete in all the requisites for their consecration, the frequency of such a ground of dispensation from rule would, in effect, obliterate the rule itself.

The Church of England could never indulge in any such latitude as this, without becoming plainly committed to the condemnation of herself. The Methodist body, has, in this country at least, assumed—(and it is better that it should be so than that men should be induced to embrace so flagrant an anomaly as that of professed auxiliaries to the Church, who act without commission from her and that within her own field of duty,)—the Methodist body has assumed the declared and open character of *Dissent*. It is one of those bodies which hold their existence upon the assumed ground of such faults and deficiencies in the National Church-Establishment that it is necessary to worship God apart and to create a new ministry and organize a new system for this object.* Are we of the Church of England, ourselves to recognize, to sanction these proceedings?—Are we to set the seal, with our own hands, to the verdict of our unfitness for the task which God and our country have committed to us, and to *homologate* the lawfulness of every new provision which any unauthorized originator may mould to-day or to-morrow for the purpose?—We may confess our numerous imperfections—we may, we must deplore before God our manifold sins—we may, we must acknowledge that others, in some instances, have laboured with effect where we had failed to do so and perhaps to labour at all,—we may, we must redouble the holy zeal which it has pleased him to awaken among us to recover ground which we have inexcusably lost,—but if it is indeed come to this, that we are to repair our deficiencies by lending countenance and help to the multiplication *ad libitum* and *ad infinitum* of new sects and new systems, to be formed, maintained and extended, be it well observed, and *that* by a zealous and ceaseless recourse to every imaginable engine of

* In this point of view, there is a difference between our own relations with the religious bodies here spoken of and our relations with the ministers and members of some national systems of Religion, in which the ancient episcopacy of the Church of God has been lost in the convulsions of the Reformation,—a loss, in many instances, deplored by those who have sustained it.

proselytism, in a great measure out of the bosom of our own venerated establishment,—then it is time for us to have done with this veneration and to bid adieu to the walls and towers of our once-loved Zion—*eamus omnis execrata civitas*,—let us look round for some other shelter and refuge, and see into the arms of what new mother we shall throw ourselves with the children whom we have to train for eternity. In truth there is choice enough before us: I believe I am correct in saying that the Methodists themselves are divided, within the limits of Upper Canada, into six different sects, and that four of these subsist or did lately subsist in By-town alone. But till we are satisfied that this is all as it should be, and prepared accordingly, if not bewildered by the variety which meets us in our search, to make our *election of domicile*, let us at least challenge for that to which we adhere, the same measure which it is agreed to deal to all others. If they part off from us and remain so parted, without molestation, let us be permitted without molestation to keep our own fences whole. Let us not be charged with intolerance for doing so: the intolerance, I maintain it, is on the other side. It is intolerance—yes, grievous intolerance—that while the most ample and unlimited indulgence is extended to every possible form of innovation in Religion, we cannot be allowed, without being subjected to comments in one quarter and attacks of a more angry and bitter character in another, simply to abide with strictness by the system and the principles of Church order and government, which we have received from our forefathers, stamped by a thousand sacred associations, and to which we are conscientiously attached. I repeat it, I am not asking here what party is right or what is wrong—but I claim shelter at least under the common liberality—and if it be said that our *exclusiveness* is offensive and that in this point we differ from others, *which*, I would desire to know, is in reality the most offensive position to occupy,—to refuse, as we do (when we know our proper ground,) intermixing ourselves with the religious proceedings of those who have separated themselves from us, and to decline accommodating and abetting their operations, or to create and to carry on, as THEY do, and seek to enlarge, day by day, the original separation—founded as I have pointed out that that separation is and must be founded?

I am well persuaded that the justice of what I am here advancing will be admitted by reasonable men among themselves,

and I speak in no spirit of unkindness towards any party or any individuals. I deplore and could weep over these multiplied and still multiplying separations, the existence of which is a reproach to the Protestant cause, a mark for the shafts of scepticism and scorn, a stumbling-block in the way of Jew and Gentile, a needless drain upon the resources of Missionary enterprise, a huge hindrance, in all directions, to the evangelization of the world; and viewing them thus, I see it to be our duty, my brethren, I feel it to be a part of our special vocation, in the times in which our lot is cast, to maintain the distinctness and integrity of our ecclesiastical constitution and to remember, in all humility and trembling, the responsibilities which we have to fulfil before God and the world, as A REFORMED AND PURIFIED CHURCH, HOLDING A COMMISSION WHICH CANNOT BE CHALLENGED AND RETAINING THE PRINCIPLES TRANSMITTED DOWN FROM THE BEGINNING, OF CATHOLIC UNITY AND ORDER. Let us make no insolent boast of our privileges; let us deny no credit to those who deserve it, though opposed to us; let us refuse no just tribute to honest and successful zeal wherever found; let us manifest no departure, in all the intercourse of life, with parties of all kinds, from the spirit of christian courtesy and the law of heavenly love; let us *if it be possible, as much as lieth in us, live peaceably with all men*†; but let us not seek to purchase a hollow peace by the surrender of principle, nor lend ourselves to any such specious and popular, but delusive and injurious imaginations as that a *Catholic spirit* consists in the abandonment of all primitive order and the equal recognition of all varieties in the development of christian faith. It is not by paving the way for the interchange of our pulpits with those of dissent; it is not—(I must speak my own settled convictions,)—by taking part in *Union Sunday-schools** or *union* operations or associations of any kind whatever for the promotion of Religion, that we can most safely

* There are not a few parents in the Congregations of the Church of England, who go one step beyond the extension of their patronage to *Union Sunday Schools*, and actually send their children to the Sunday Schools connected with dissenting Meeting-houses, at the same time that they profess an intention of bringing them up in the Communion of the Church. The danger of such proceedings is far from being confined to the probable severance of these children altogether from the bosom of their spiritual mother. All principle of ascertained and distinct bond of Church-fellowship and all regular maintenance of their proper relations with their own legitimate pastor, being, to say the least of it, loosened and impaired, one natural consequence is that of a vague licence in matters of religious observance and belief, of which it is difficult to pronounce where it may end. It is in vain to say that they still have the Bible: for God has provided something besides the

† Rom. XII. 18.

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and surely advance the cause of Christ upon earth. It is not thus that, in the end, we can most effectually recommend ourselves and our system in the eyes of those who differ from us. They, on the contrary, when they witness the strength of our convictions and study the working of our principles, and follow them out to many of their collateral no less than their direct results, are led often to institute an honest enquiry into the foundation of the christian Ministry, which terminates in their cordial adoption of episcopacy. This has been the case of *thousands* in our own day. In England there are many meeting-houses which have been converted into Churches and Chapels of the Establishment, and in the United States of America, I believe that more than one half of the Clergy of the Episcopal Church, with a very large proportion of the laity of that Church, belonged originally to other denominations. Examples of the same nature have by no means been wanting in this Province. Such an effect will certainly not follow from a haughty assertion of our distinguishing characteristics and a contemptuous depreciation of other christian bodies : but neither will it follow from the exhibition of a loose and undisciplined Churchmanship and a mistaken spirit of compromise and complaisance. It will not follow from our opening our Churches for the accommodation of Dissent. It will not follow from our suffering ourselves to be swept along with the crowd who march with **LIBERALITY** inscribed upon their banners and are saluted with the applauding shouts of the world, in which *they have their reward*.* If we can be brought to look deeper than the surface of things, we shall find, I believe, *first*, that *Liberality* not only does not consist in the confused equalization, in our judgments, of all religious parties who hold certain undefined and undefinable *essentials* in Religion, but that there is little or no place left for its application, little or no field for its exercise, where there are no distinctive principles considered worth contending for : it is in knowing how to combine with a firm and unyielding maintenance of what we prize ourselves, a kind feeling and a charitable deportment towards those whose separation

Bible to hold men together in Religion, and this we learn in the *Bible itself*. It has occurred, as I have been well assured, in a Sunday School in this Diocese, conducted with great ability and upon the *Union plan*, that one of the principal teachers has taken a leading part in establishing successively, in the same place, first an Independent and then a Baptist Meeting-house. Let any reflecting and unprejudiced man ask himself what is the probable effect upon the minds of the children, of such a circumstance as this.

* Matth. vi. 2.

from us we deplore and feel ourselves compelled to disapprove, that Liberty comes truly into play : And, *secondly*, we shall find that all schemes and projects for christian union based upon a proposed comprehension of separate religious bodies whose external separation under their respective denominations, is to be *continued*, are utterly futile and fallacious and can only tend to retard the grand and glorious object which is professedly in view. The day, I am well persuaded, is coming on, although I shall not live to see it, when men will look back upon many prevailing notions and practices which quietly usurp the name of liberality, precisely as we now look back upon the dominant errors of past ages from which the world has escaped. I am not insensible of high and peculiar blessings which distinguish the present day : I am not unthankful for many signs of farther amelioration in reserve and for the impulse given to efforts for the larger and still larger extension of temporal and spiritual advantages to all the family of man. Fervently and from the bottom of my soul, do I bless the gracious author of all good, for the fruit which is thus in our hands and the promise which is permitted to hang in our view. Nevertheless there may be some weighty considerations serving to qualify our exultation over the generations which have gone before us and to abate the tone of our triumph in the enjoyment of privileges which were denied to former times. Men may be found to talk fluently enough and with the most soothing as well as the most undoubting self-appropriation of what they commend, about the advance of liberal and enlightened principles in the nineteenth century, and the emancipation of the human intellect from antiquated prejudices, who, all the while and in the very act, are but exhibiting the dictates of a shallow, common-place, and even servile order of mind, which receives and gives out its impressions from those maxims of the world which happen to be in the ascendant and embraces without discrimination the genuine improvements, or the characteristic errors of the age and scene, in which it occupies its place. If in the exercise of those offices which I have been called to hold in the Church of God, I have been kept, in any humble measure, from these mistakes, I may venture to recommend to the acceptance of my brethren of the Clergy and Laity, the results of my own experience and observation. Time has only confirmed me upon these points, in what I have long ago felt and have repeatedly taught ; nor have I seen the

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slightest reason to swerve from the sentiments, with the expression of which as made (among other and some older examples) in 1828, 1836, and 1838, when I had occasion to appear in print upon some questions in agitation, affecting the Church, I shall here conclude this address,—more moved, perhaps, in bringing forward these old and forgotten declarations of my own, by *this* than by any other consideration, that, if I do not deceive myself, they exhibit their author as having been enabled to preserve all along, in alliance with the same uniform and continued maintenance of the strictest Church principles, some considerateness and charity of feeling towards those from whom he differs.

The first extract is from a publication of 1828 :

“In the same manner they,” [i. e. my opponents in the matter under discussion,] “say there may be unity without uniformity.” That the true spirit of *Christian Love* may exist in the hearts of *individuals* where there is no *unity of external church-government*, (for *uniformity in the mode of worship* is something perfectly distinct,)—we feel most thoroughly assured ; and that *this unity* of order and government *may exist* where great evils and gross corruptions are to be seen, is what it is plainly impossible to deny.—Still it is unity, and although it does not *constitute* all the blessings of unity, there can be *no other genuine unity*, (whatever mutual good understanding may prevail.)—where it does not exist. * * * * *

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“No—never can they,” [the Clergy of the Church of England] “think that when Christ prayed that his disciples might be *one**; that when the Apostle charges it upon them that there should be *no schism in the body*; that they should *all speak the same thing*;—that they should be *perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*; that they should remember the *one* hope of their calling, *one* faith, *one* baptism—that they should beware of calling themselves after particular founders of the opinions which they had embraced, *I am of Paul—and I of Apollos—and I of Cephas**—never, with all this before their eyes, can they think that a true picture of *Christian unity* is there presented where *THE BODY* consists of separate and independent

* John XVII. 11.—1 Cor. XII. 25.—1 Cor. I. 10.—Ephes. IV. 4, 5.—1 Cor. I. 12.

parts ; where an unlimited right is assumed of creating new ministries and new societies ; where some reject altogether the sacraments ordained by Christ, others, as if by an authority above His, dispense with them as non-essentials, others again vary the application of them ;—where the very bond of common adherence to essentials is uncertain, because, one party may pronounce that to be essential which another regards as positive error ;—and finally where *every-one of them saith*, I am of Calvin—I am of Wesley—I am of Whitfield—I am of some other *Father or Master upon earth**. This state of things the Episcopal Clergy can never be brought to regard as a true picture of the family and the fold of Christ in its right state, or as reconcileable with the views of unity furnished in Scripture ; and so far from conceiving that they yield advantage to the cause of the Church of Rome by thus treating the divisions of Protestants, they plainly see that these divisions with the licence now given to them by public opinion and the plausible inference afforded, that as *truth is one*, it cannot be possessed by those who are divided among themselves,—constitute the sole available strength, and tend to aid the proselytism of that Church ; who could make no impression against the overwhelming power of divine truth with the auxiliary force of genuine ecclesiastical antiquity, if these could be brought more fully to bear upon her by means of one regularly coherent system of Protestant faith. It is a mere truism to say that mankind are prone always to extremes, yet how many men seem to think that, in order to be right, they have only to be as opposite as possible, and in all possible points, to that which is wrong ! and how is this remark exemplified in many proceedings connected with religion, in the present day, where, under color of preserving the rights of conscience, and of renouncing the yoke of human usurpation, the most direct appeals are addressed to the old rebellious principle of human nature, thus chosen as the instrument to *work the righteousness of God* ! †

As far as we can judge from ourselves and those whom we best know, an ardent love of union,—a yearning of the heart to bring those who ought to be brothers in faith, to act in concert and to frequent the courts of the house of God together, (operating upon a conviction that the extension of their own establish-

* I. Cor. 1, 12. Matth. XXIII. 9, 10. † James I. 20.

ment affords the truest means of effecting this object,) is the predominant feeling which dictates what is termed the policy of our Clergy ; and, if the direct interests of a particular Church which has claims upon their love and duty, have mixed themselves with their motives, we believe that we could name some other instances, in which precisely the same principle has been a sufficiently obvious ingredient of religious zeal. * * *

Whatever credit we may gain for the declaration, it is with truth that we declare contention to be hateful to our souls—we, at least, who, in the midst of multiplied occupations, have by forced toil, prepared this hurried review, can say from our hearts that we have done it as a severe and painful duty ; that in all contentions connected with Religion, we are dragged against our nature, and full often have borrowed the language of the Psalmist, to vent in secret our longing for repose and peace, *O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest.**” * * *

The Extract which follows is from a publication of 1836 :—

“ In the maintenance of what I conceive to be our rightful cause, I feel able to say that I have always been actuated by something very different from party spirit or uncharitable feeling. I feel how gladly I could give the hand to any body of sincere Christians in a way which conscience would permit ; and how willingly I would engage, if there were hope of success from such a measure, in any plan of *comprehension* which would not compromise the essential principles of the Episcopal Church.”

The last Extract is from a publication of 1838 :—

“ What an incalculable advantage would it be to the cause of Protestants, and what sacrifices ought ALL Protestant parties, to be ready to make for the sake of gaining it, if a *comprehension* could be effected in which they would stand as one body, occupying a ground respecting their Orders which could not be challenged by the Romanist himself, if well-informed. With respect to the Episcopal Church, this is the fact. Witness the *Defense de la validité des Ordinations Anglicanes*, by le

* Ps. IV. 6.

Père Courayer, whose grave-stone may be seen in the solemn cloisters of Westminster Abbey. Although the man was, in the end, persecuted, his proofs can never be shaken."

I have now, my brethren, put my sentiments, past and present, before you—the one not varying from the other, nor will there, I am persuaded, be any variation (except that my visions of a *comprehension* rather fade from before my eyes,) in those which I shall carry with me, upon these points, to my grave. In the full assurance that you will kindly receive this signification of them and with prayer to God that it may not be unprofitable to you, I now dismiss the subject—only once more repeating that, whether we are right or wrong in our conscientious convictions, no man living has a right, according to the received principles of religious liberty, to attack us for those convictions in the manner which has been recently experienced, unless, in simply holding and quietly acting up to them, we can be charged with wanton aggression, or injury to public order and morals. For any controversy which is raised upon such a question, or any painful feeling which may be engendered in the agitation of it, *we* are none of us responsible who only resist the violation of our own fixed principles and standing rules. *They*, of the two, might rather be regarded as responsible, (although I have no desire to hold them so,) who make applications which might be foreseen to be inadmissible.

I am always,

Your affectionate servant in the Gospel,

G. J. MONTREAL.

Quebec, 1st Dec., 1845.

P. S.—It is proper, perhaps, to guard what is said towards the bottom of page 10, against some misconstruction to which it may be liable. With all the sins which we, in common, in some shape or other, with all religious bodies have to acknowledge before God, we have abundant and especial cause to be thankful, as well for the lights which have never been wanting in the reformed Church of England,—martyrs, scholars, divines and pastors of the people, not surpassed among uninspired men,—as for many happy fruits of the system, which have been seen, even in the worst times, among the laity. And, in this country, I am bold to say and *no man shall stop me in this same confident boasting*, that the Church of England population will be ungrateful indeed, when they forget what they owe, either to the Church at home for her fostering care and long continued supplies of spiritual succour, or to the prelates, my predecessors, who have presided over the affairs of this Diocese, and the Clergy, as a body, who have laboured and are labouring within its limits.

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